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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

CHANG, JUNGWON

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2154

DATE MAILED: 11/05/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/822,673

Applicant(s)

IYER, SRIDHAR V.

Examiner

Jungwon Chang

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 September 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/10/01.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-23 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 2 and 11-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

- a. The claim language in the following claims is not clearly understood:
 - i. as to claim 2, line 3, it is uncertain whether "the user" refers to "a first user" in lines 1 and 2;
 - ii. as to claim 11, lines 3-4, 6, 10, 15, it is uncertain whether "the shared area" refers to "a virtual shared area" in line 3;
 - iii. as to claims 12, 14 and 15, they have the same deficiency as claim 11 above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that

form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. Claims 18, 19, 22 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hatlelid et al. (US 6,772,195), hereinafter Hatlelid.

6. As to claim 18, Hatlelid discloses the invention substantially as claimed, including a method for sharing multi-media information (i.e., voice conversation, dialog, video, image, and text) in a virtual studio (i.e., virtual world; 100, fig. 1; col. 3, lines 33-46) on the Internet (col. 1, lines 24-34), the virtual studio having a plurality of virtual rooms (i.e., virtual conversation area; 404, fig. 4; col. 3, lines 50-55; col. 5, lines 35-45), the method comprising:

recognizing an owner (i.e., initiator/creator who builds the conversation area; col. 5, lines 8-10) of a virtual room in the virtual studio (304, fig. 3; col. 5, lines 5-12; col. 7, lines 1-6);

inviting a plurality of visitors to the virtual room by the owner (i.e., joining the virtual room; col. 4, lines 34-42; col. 5, lines 20-29; col. 7, lines 10-18);

control-sharing, by the owner, the multi-media information in the virtual room to be shared by the visitors simultaneously (col. 1, lines 12-15; allowing users to listen to the conversation and see the virtually displayed avatar characters with other users at

the same time; col. 2, lines 7-23; col. 3, lines 50-67) if a communication link (i.e., communication session) is maintained (i.e., connected) between the visitors and the virtual room (col. 2, lines 47-59; col. 9, lines 25-28 and 49-54).

7. As to claim 19, Hatlelid discloses wherein the multi-media information is fully downloaded (i.e., receive) to display devices (i.e., monitor) of the visitors before the control-sharing (col. 9, lines 22-24; col. 2, lines 15-16), wherein such downloaded information is not accessible by any visitor until a verification is made to confirm that the owner is control-sharing the multi-media information (col. 2, lines 24-32; col. 12, lines 27-38; col. 5, lines 13-29) and the communication link (i.e., communication session) is maintained (i.e., connected) between the virtual room and the visitor (col. 2, lines 47-59; col. 9, lines 25-28 and 49-54).

8. As to claim 22, Hatlelid discloses multi-media information is owned by the owner (i.e., initiator/creator who builds the conversation area, i.e., virtual area; col. 5, lines 5-12; col. 7, lines 1-6).

9. As to claim 23, Hatlelid discloses the multi-media information is provided by an on-line repository (i.e., communication channel; col. 2, lines 47-59; medium; col. 12, lines 43-47) not owned by the owner of the virtual room (i.e., the participants broadcast their communications, i.e., multi-media information, on a chat cluster communication channel; col. 2, lines 47-52; dialogue transmitted by users are broadcast on a

communication channel; col. 2, lines 53-56; col. 8, lines 46-61).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. Claims 20 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatlelid et al. (US 6,772,195), in view of Butler (US 6,584,493).

12. As to claims 20 and 21, Hatlelid does not specifically disclose posting a control-sharing schedule by the owner to all the visitors; and negotiating, by at least one visitor, with the owner for control the room. However, Butler discloses posting a control-sharing schedule by the owner to all the visitors (col. 11, lines 45-54; col. 22, lines 5-27); and negotiating, by at least one visitor, with the owner for control the room (col. 6, lines 22-35; col. 21, lines 33-35; col. 22, lines 39-46). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Hatlelid and Butler because Butler's negotiating for control sharing would improve the scalability of Hatlelid by using the redundant controller that can take over the control of the room when a failure of the original controller is detected.

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13. Claims 1, 3-6 and 8-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Butler (US 6,584,493) in view of "Official Notice".

14. As to claim 1, Butler discloses a method for sharing an area (i.e., Microsoft NetMeeting; Internet and intranet multiparty voice and video conferencing; col. 1, lines 39-50) among a plurality of users (i.e., Internet and intranet multiparty conferencing and collaboration; col. 1, lines 10-16 and 39-50), the method comprising:

admitting a first user (i.e., Host, 60, fig. 2) of the area (i.e., Microsoft NetMeeting; Internet and intranet multiparty voice and video conferencing; col. 1, lines 39-50) to take control of the area for sharing a first subject information (i.e., exactly one of the members collaborating was considered to be in control; col. 3, lines 17-28; col. 4, lines 7-13; col. 5, lines 44-49);

admitting a second user (i.e., Viewer A, B, fig. 2) to the area, the second user having a desire to control the area for sharing a second subject information (i.e., a remote, i.e., second user, may also request permission from the host, i.e., first user, to take control of her shared application...the remote sends a request to assume control to the host; col. 6, lines 2-7; col. 11, lines 35-44; col. 1, lines 44-55; col. 9, lines 61-65);

negotiating the control of the area between the first and the second users (i.e., the control may also passed from one remote to another...if the passing of control to a subsequent remote is agreeable with the host, control is passed to that subsequent remote; col. 6, lines 22-35; col. 21, lines 33-35; control is a privately negotiated contract between the host and the viewer; col. 22, lines 39-46); and

control-sharing either the first or the second subject information in the area according to the negotiation (data sharing; col. 9, lines 61-65; col. 11, lines 35-44; col. 13, lines 48-50; for application sharing, the host needs to represent the window to the viewer, with a list of what is shared ...when the host is being controlled by a remote, he uses a control...the window list for application sharing indicating what is processed; col. 18, lines 31-40);

wherein the control of the area is exclusively shared by the first and second users (col. 5, lines 44-49 and 56-67; col. 6, lines 2-7; col. 11, lines 40-54; col. 22, lines 39-46), and the first or second subject information is broadcast in the area (i.e., allows a person in a conference running an application locally with local data to send the graphics of the application to the other people in the conference...the remote people see what the local person does; col. 1, lines 44-49; col. 26, lines 44-47; col. 27, lines 29-31 and 35-39).

15. Butler discloses Internet and intranet multiparty voice and video conferencing (i.e., Microsoft NetMeeting; col. 1, lines 39-50). However, Butler does not specifically use a term "virtual area". "Official Notice" is taken that both the concept and the advantages of providing a virtual area is well known and expected in the art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include virtual area because multiparty voice and video conferencing would provide a virtual communication area to allow all participants communicating and meeting over the network without having to physically be present at the meeting location.

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16. As to claim 3, Butler discloses wherein the step of admitting a second user further comprises: informing the second user about a sharability of the area (col. 3, lines 6-10; col. 10, lines 50-59); and disclosing a control schedule of the area (col. 3, lines 60-62; col. 19, lines 60-63), wherein the control schedule comprises necessary information regarding the first user and his control attributes (col. 22, lines 58-67).

17. As to claim 4, Butler discloses wherein the step of negotiating further comprises facilitating communications between the first and second user to reach an agreed control schedule (col. 22, lines 5-27 and 39-51).

18. As to claim 5, Butler further discloses admitting other users as passive users who have no desire to control the area (i.e., users who were only in the meeting to view; col. 2, lines 9-12; other members were controlled and their mice and keyboards were locked; col. 3, lines 17-21).

19. As to claim 6, it is rejected for the same reasons set forth in claim 1 above. In addition, Butler discloses sharing a area among a plurality of users for performing at least one multi-media item (col. 9, lines 61-65); and wherein the users admitted to the area who are not the owner can form a passive audience to share the control-shared multi-media item (i.e., users who were only in the meeting to view; col. 2, lines 9-12; other members were controlled and their mice and keyboards were locked; col. 3, lines 17-21).

20. As to claim 8, it is rejected for the same reasons set forth in claim 3 above.

21. As to claims 9 and 10, they are rejected for the same reasons set forth in claim 5 above.

22. As to claim 11, it is rejected for the same reasons set forth in claim 1 above. In addition, Butler discloses providing a shared area having a unique electronic identifier (i.e., H.320 address, H.323 address; col. 9, lines 36-51), the shared area being controlled by an owner (i.e., controller) for permitting access to subject information in the shared area (i.e., exactly one of the members collaborating was considered to be in control; col. 3, lines 17-28; col. 4, lines 7-13; col. 5, lines 44-49); allowing a user to connect to the shared area through a user device (20, fig. 1) (col. 1, lines 10-16; col. 8, line 66 – col. 9, line 13) and transfer at least a part of the subject information to the user device (col. 9, lines 61-65); maintaining, by the user device, the connection to the shared area for keeping the transfer of the subject information (col. 8, line 66 – col. 9, line 13; col. 9, lines 61-65); storing, in a storage area in the user device (22, 24, 25, 27-31, fig. 2; col. 8, lines 2-37), the transferred subject information (col. 23, line 60 – col. 24, line 3); and if the user device attempts to access the stored subject information (col. 1, lines 48-55; data sharing; col. 9, lines 61-65), then: verifying the connection to the shared area (col. 10, lines 66-67); verifying the owner information (col. 22, lines 58-60); and verifying that the owner is currently control-sharing the stored subject information (i.e., verifying the current state of the owner; col. 23, lines 22-26).

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23. Butler discloses encoding data (col. 11, lines 21-22; col. 14, line 62), compression data (col. 14, line 64 –col. 15, line 2) and private communication (i.e., private communication between host, i.e., owner, and a remote user; abstract, lines 9-11). However, Butler does not specifically disclose encoding the unique electronic identifier of the virtual area. “Official Notice” is taken that both the concept and the advantages of providing for encoding the unique electronic identifier of the virtual area is well known and expected in the art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include encoding the unique electronic identifier because it would provide improve security by allowing the user to share the information with only desired user.

24. As to claim 12, Butler discloses storing the subject information in a temporary storage area in the user device and deleting the stored information in the temporary storage area upon the user device disconnecting from the shared area (i.e., frees up those resources when they are no longer needed; col. 23, line 60 – col. 24, line 3).

25. As to claim 13, Butler discloses synchronizing the user device’s access to the stored subject information with the control-sharing of the owner (col. 5, lines 31-38; col. 16, lines 10-21; col. 19, lines 24-29).

26. As to claim 14, Butler discloses providing means for interacting among the users in the shared area during the control-sharing of the subject information (i.e.,

collaboration information among the users; col. 1, lines 10-16 and 39-50; col. 4, lines 36-42).

27. As to claim 15, Butler discloses displaying (col. 8, lines 48-50), to the user, a current state of the shared area (col. 23, lines 22-26).

28. As to claim 16, Butler discloses scheduling, by the owner, a predetermined time the subject information will be control-shared (col. 3, lines 60-62; col. 19, lines 60-63).

29. As to claim 17, Butler discloses encoding, the user device, owner information (col. 11, lines 21-22; col. 14, line 62).

30. Claims 2 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Butler (US 6,584,493) in view of Aravamudan (US 6,732,145), hereinafter referred to as Aravamudan.

31. As to claims 2 and 7, Butler does not specifically disclose authenticating the first user. Aravamudan discloses authenticating the first user (i.e., log-in, 310, fig. 3; controller ID/Password, ID of Leader, 315, fig. 3; col. 5, lines 3-8, 13-18 and 26-37). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Butler and Aravamudan because Aravamudan's authenticating the first user would improve security of Butler's system by verifying the

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identification of the collaboration leader prior to enroll the collaborative conferencing system (Aravamudan's reference; col. 5, lines 3-8).

Conclusion

32. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

Matsui et al, patent 6,738,807, Matsumoto et al, patent 6,678,720, Day et al, patent 6,684,212, Matsuura et al, patent 6,753,857, Bookspan et al, patent 6,629,129, Kozuka, patent 6,166,727, Matsuda, patent 6,577,306, Moller et al, patent 6,598,074, Fersch, "Distributed Interaction in Virtual Spaces", University of Vienna, 1999 disclose a virtual space communication system for sharing and collaborating information/data among members over a network.

33. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jungwon Chang whose telephone number is (703)305-9669. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30-6:00 (Monday-Friday).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John A Follansbee can be reached on (703)305-8498. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for

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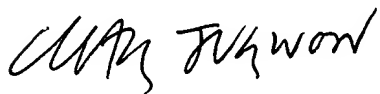
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you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic

Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JWC" followed by a stylized flourish.

JWC

November 1, 2004